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DE RUEHNT #1199/01 1941051
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1125
INFO RHMFIUU/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT

UNCLAS TASHKENT 001199

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [EAID](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN: INL PROJECT PROPOSALS

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: In June, 2009 there was a major breakthrough in the counternarcotics situation in Uzbekistan when the host government finally accredited a DEA Country Attache, which presents an opportunity to pursue an important mutual interest. The strawman exercise resulted in limited funding for INL activities in Uzbekistan, but given the positive change in the political situation we request that additional funding be considered to help DEA rebuild its relationships with key law enforcement agencies and promote counternarcotics cooperation in a strategic country that has the highest population in the region and is the only one to border each of the other former Soviet Central Asian Republics as well as Afghanistan. We also wish to continue a successful forensic laboratory project that will run out of pipeline funds at the end of this fiscal year and continue with planned projects on drug demand reduction and rule of law programming. End summary.

¶2. (U) Per reftel, Embassy Tashkent submits the following project proposals for consideration by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) for fiscal year 2010:

Expand Counternarcotics Cooperation

(A) Expand Counternarcotics Training / \$500,000 / Priority 1

(B) Background -- In the FY 2009 strawman exercise no funds were allocated for specific counternarcotics assistance, with limited funds instead addressing drug demand reduction and off-shore rule of law programming. The situation on the ground has changed dramatically since the fall 2008 strawman, however, when in June 2009 the Government of Uzbekistan finally accredited a Special Agent from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) who will serve as the Tashkent-based Country Attache. This marked a major shift in Uzbekistan's willingness to cooperate with the United States on counternarcotics and will allow an accredited DEA Agent to work in the country for the first time since cooperation was suspended two years ago.

(C) Goal -- The Country Attache has already begun rebuilding relationships on temporary duty trips to the country to meet with key law enforcement entities, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs Counter-Drug Department and the Sensitive Investigative

Unit (SIU), the latter of which was equipped largely with the assistance of INL funds in a previous era of cooperation. The DEA Country Attache will contribute to important mission goals, and counternarcotics is an area of mutual interest in which we believe we can successfully engage Uzbekistan. There is a need for funding assistance to help DEA reestablish cooperation, and the identified priorities are for interdiction equipment and program design and learning (goal 1.4). DEA will focus its efforts on operational, investigative, diversion training, and intelligence exchange.

(D) Project Description - The newly accredited DEA Agent will replace aging, obsolete equipment at the SIU donated by INL several years ago. Uzbek officers have meticulously maintained the equipment, ranging from vehicles to cell phones, even after useful life spans have elapsed. These working level contacts are also eager to reengage with DEA peers on counternarcotics cooperation, but a lack of high-level political will prevented contact. Upgrading equipment will help DEA gain access and build trust with counterparts, and related training programs will sharpen the skills of Uzbek officers at a time when the U.S. is moving away from eradication efforts in neighboring Afghanistan and focusing on interdiction.

(E) Performance Indicators - Quantifiable performance indicators would include monitoring seizure data, which is regularly provided by the National Drug Control Center. Renewed DEA engagement should lead to increases in seizures throughout Uzbekistan. Another indicator of robust engagement is the number of officers trained, which is important in a country where every invitation to participate in international events is closely scrutinized by the suspicious host government.

(F) Sustainability - DEA hopes for a long-term engagement in Uzbekistan to complement its growing activities throughout Central and South Asia. The project funds will help ensure that DEA is able to develop an effective working relationship with Uzbekistan, which will contribute to greater coordination of operational information in the entire region.

(G) Timeline - The Country Attache will arrive at post in September 2009, at which time he will be ready to immediately implement projects to jumpstart counternarcotics cooperation with Uzbekistan. Initial project timeframe is approximately two years.

(H) Evaluation - At the end of the Country Attache's initial tour, we will be able to evaluate the impact of renewed cooperation and whether operational information provided by the Government of Uzbekistan is contributing to the region-wide counternarcotics efforts.

Continue Forensic Laboratory Support

(A) Upgrade Main Forensic Laboratory under Ministry of Health / \$500,000 / Priority 2

(B) Background - As with counternarcotics, the FY 2009 strawman exercise did not result in the allocation of funds for forensic activities. Forensic assistance was included in our Mission Strategic Plan, and additional funds would allow an already

successful project to continue. Prior-year funds were available to spend through FY 2008 on an INL-funded, DOJ-ICITAP-implemented project to provide sophisticated laboratory instruments, training assistance, and professional development opportunities to the main forensic laboratory. The assistance is deeply appreciated by the cadre of scientific professionals and has engendered goodwill in the bilateral relationship, including coverage of signing ceremonies in the state-controlled press. The laboratory plays an important role in analyzing evidence in narcotics cases, but has also already utilized U.S.-donated equipment to resolve criminal cases. In an environment in which it is difficult to engage in human rights programming, forensic science work has provided an important inroad in promoting the rule of law and increasing the role of evidence in conducting sound investigations and trials.

(C) Goal - The overarching goal is to help the laboratory qualify for accreditation from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which is still several years away even with sustained U.S. support. Other goals are to improve the criminal justice process by increasing the validity of evidence and the awareness among scientific and law enforcement officials about their roles in convicting criminals and exonerating innocent parties. Assistance will also be provided to provincial laboratories, which are far from ISO accreditation but which nonetheless play important local roles.

(D) Project Description - Numerous high-tech instruments - such as mass spectrometers and gas chromatographs - have already been provided with prior-year funds, but there is still additional equipment that must be purchased. American experts from the DOJ will also regularly travel to Uzbekistan to help local counterparts properly train on new equipment. The isolated group of scientific professionals will also travel abroad to international scientific conferences to learn about peer review, presenting their work, and what is expected in the international forensic community.

(E) Performance Indicators - In addition to obtaining accreditation from ISO, other indicators will be the number of analyses performed by the main forensic laboratories using U.S.-donated equipment.

(F) Sustainability - Incorporating U.S. expert-led training visits soon after the delivery of equipment is important to long-term sustainability, and the lab staff are already motivated from the original project to strive for international accreditation.

(G) Timeline - This project request is for an additional two year horizon.

(H) Evaluation - INL officers and DOJ-ICITAP will be able to evaluate the success of the project. The initial project generated goodwill and led to substantial progress in the capability of the laboratory to conduct analyses.

Drug Demand Reduction

(A) Drug Demand Reduction Project / \$100,000 / Priority 3

(B) Background - Funds were approved for this project, which will build on a previously implemented project through UNODC. The quantity of narcotics transiting Uzbekistan, particularly in the

provinces close to Afghanistan and Tajikistan, has increased substantially in recent years. Drug demand reduction projects are not politically sensitive and are thus a good way to build our relationship with the Government of Uzbekistan and generate goodwill. As DEA reengages with law enforcement agencies, drug demand reduction programs will be a good way to complement enforcement-oriented programs.

(C) Goal - To educate young people, mainly high school students in vulnerable populations, about the dangers of drug use.

(D) Project Description - UNODC will pick up where it left off on a previous project to work with schools to raise awareness, and this project will also involve important neighborhood associations ("mahallas") in a more community-based approach.

(E) Performance Indicators - UNODC will test students about their knowledge about drug abuse both before and after training programs, which will demonstrate increased awareness about the hazards of drug use. We will also be able to track the total number of students reached in outreach efforts and training sessions.

(F) Sustainability - Teachers are also included in the drug demand reduction program, as are neighborhood associations. These stakeholders will be able to continue training future generations of students.

(G) Timeline - Two year project timeframe.

(H) Evaluation - We hope to see that drug demand reduction programs will lead to a reduced number of drug users in key provinces of Uzbekistan despite the recent increases in quantities of narcotics being transshipped through Uzbekistan.

Offshore Rule of Law Programming / \$200,000 / Priority 3

(A) American Bar Association - Rule of Law Initiative (ABA-ROLI)
Defense Attorney Training / \$200,000 / Also priority 3

(B) (SBU) Background - Since ABA was forced to exit Uzbekistan (along with most foreign NGOs) in 2005-06, we have continued to support offshore training opportunities for defense attorneys from Uzbekistan. Sessions are generally held in Almaty, Kazakhstan and whenever possible are held in conjunction with other regional U.S.-funded activities to economize on travel costs. This project work is an important way to continue at least some rule of law programming, although we hope to eventually resume activities in Uzbekistan in the future. In 2008, despite several important new laws and Presidential decrees welcoming reform, Uzbekistan declined an offer for ABA to implement a habeas corpus project in Uzbekistan that closely mirrored President Karimov's stated goals.

(C) Goal - Train the small cadre of defense attorneys in Uzbekistan about their evolving role in the Uzbek legal system as well as maintain contacts with international peers.

(D) Project Description - ABA-ROLI invites Uzbek defenders to regional events offshore.

(E) Performance Indicators - This project is difficult to quantify, but we hope to see increases in proactive defense of accused persons in trials, including challenges to pre-trial detention rulings.

(F) Sustainability - Many defense attorneys are part of law firms and can help train colleagues in international best practices.

(G) Timeline - Two year project timeframe.

(H) Evaluation - The project should help to sustain an isolated group of defense attorneys in Uzbekistan who are struggling to find training opportunities in a country where a state-controlled entity recently supplanted the independent bar association and administers subjective licensing examinations.

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